

Allen West: Gingrich Is Carrying 200 Pounds Of Political Baggage (Huffington Post)

By Sam Stein

It's not exactly clear what segment of the Republican electorate is behind Newt Gingrich's surge in recent presidential primary polls, save that they aren't fans of Mitt Romney.

Gingrich isn't well regarded among established Republican types, who are fully aware of his propensity for bombast and verbal and political gaffes. Nor does it seem like he would do well with the Tea Party crowd, which is skeptical of both long service in Washington and careers in influence peddling.

Those, at least, were the criticisms Rep. Allen West (R-Fla.), one of the Tea Party's more vocal elected members, had of Gingrich when he appeared on the Laura Ingraham radio show Tuesday.

"Well, he's a fighter, but he's also a fighter that's carrying a 200-pound rucksack on his back with all the baggage trying to fight," West said. "I think the problem with the Republican Party, Laura, and you've been around this more than I have, is that we continue to believe in leadership by entitlement. We don't come up with new faces, new visionary leaders. You look at everyone on this stage -- they've been in this game for quite some time."

At that point, West was cut off, with Ingraham noting that the new blood in the GOP had decided against making a presidential bid.

The Huffington Post emailed the congressman's office to follow up on his Gingrich remarks. The staff sent back a link showing Army backpack usually weighs between 60 and 100 pounds.

The implication: Gingrich was carrying more baggage than the usual soldier.

"If the average U.S. Army soldier carries a 45- to 65-pound rucksack when fighting our enemies in the field," one West aide said. "What would it be like if a soldier had to carry a 200-pound rucksack trying to fight?"

The entire story can be accessed by clicking [here](#) .